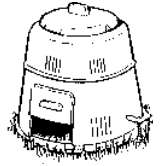




## COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ HOME COMPOSTING PROGRAM

# More Options for Composting with Worms

### Add worms to a regular backyard compost bin



Is your compost bin a cool, slow, add-as-you-go affair? Does it contain a high percentage (85% or more) of fruit and vegetable scraps? Do you keep it in the shade? If the answer is yes, redworms will be an excellent addition. Let worms turn your compost!

For rodent resistance, bin should have a snug-fitting lid and no holes larger than 1/4 inch. It's a good idea to bury the bottom three inches of your bin in soil so critters can't tunnel under.

**Start with bedding.** If your bin is empty, you will need a six-inch layer of bedding material in the bottom of the bin. Common bedding material choices are shredded leaves, straw, shredded cardboard, shredded non-glossy newspaper, compost and coconut pith fiber. For best results, mix two or more materials to make your bedding. Add a handful of soil or compost. Moisten the bedding until it is a little wetter than a wrung out sponge.

If your bin has been in use for some time and already has six or more inches of decomposing food scraps and compost in the bottom, there is no need to add additional bedding.

**Add the worms.** Now you are ready to add your worms! Put 1-2 pounds of worms, along with any bedding left in the shipping container, in one area near the edge of the bin. Let the worms find their own way into the pile. They will find the areas with temperatures and moisture level they are most comfortable with.

**Add food scraps and a layer of bedding.** Add fruit and vegetable scraps every week. If you're starting from scratch, be sure to include some soft, partially rotted food in the first feeding. Spread the food in a 1-2 inch layer over the bedding surface, and then cover with a two-inch layer of fresh, dampened bedding material (shredded newspaper is great). A new food scrap/bedding layer can be added every week or so.

**Keep it moist.** Always keep the bin contents a little wetter than a wrung out sponge. Keep the bin in the shade. Fruit and vegetable scraps are 80% water, so you may not need to add any water. Your compost will soon be teaming with worms!

### For more information:

- Order a copy of the Worm Composting brochure (available in Spanish and English) by downloading it from the website. The website can provide information on where to buy worms, bins or troubleshooting problems.
- Check out *Worms Eat My Garbage*, by Mary Appelhof, available at the Santa Cruz Public Libraries.

Learn more about composting  
online at

[www.compostsantacruzcounty.org](http://www.compostsantacruzcounty.org)



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